
Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ)



Environmental Justice Fact Sheet

National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC)

All communities and persons across this Nation should live in a safe and healthful environment.

With these words, President Clinton issued Executive Order 12898 on February 11, 1994 to establish environmental justice as a national priority. This was the first Presidential effort to direct all federal agencies with a public health or environmental mission to make environmental justice an integral part of their policies and activities. The Order, entitled "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," focuses federal attention on the environmental and human health conditions of minority populations and low-income populations with the goal of achieving environmental protection for all communities.

In 1993, Administrator Browner made environmental justice an EPA priority. She stated that "many people of color, low-income and Native American communities have raised concerns that they suffer a disproportionate burden of health consequences due to the siting of industrial plants and waste dumps, and from exposure to pesticides or other toxic chemicals at home and on the job and that environmental programs do not adequately address these disproportionate exposures...EPA is committed to addressing these concerns and is assuming a leadership role in environmental justice to enhance environmental quality for all residents of the United States. Incorporating environmental justice into every day Agency activities and decisions will be a major undertaking. Fundamental reform will be needed in Agency operations."

ESTABLISHING AN INFRASTRUCTURE

In response to public concerns, EPA created the Office of Environmental Justice in 1992 and implemented a new organizational infrastructure to integrate environmental justice into EPA's policies, programs, and activities. A **Policy Working Group** made up of senior managers and policy analysts represents each headquarters office and region. It provides leadership and direction on strategic planning to ensure that environmental justice is incorporated into agency operations; the most active group is the **Environmental Justice Coordinators Council** which serves as the frontline staff specifically responsible to ensure policy input, program development, and implementation of environmental justice throughout the Agency. This new structure has established a clear commitment from EPA's senior management to all personnel that environmental justice is a priority.

OBTAINING STAKEHOLDER ADVICE - NEJAC

The functions of this Council cannot be performed within the Agency. This council is the first time that community, industry and state/local government groups have been brought together where a dialogue can begin to "reinvent" solutions to environmental justice problems. It is essential that such a dialogue occur. In addition, the NEJAC provides a valuable forum for integrating environmental justice with other EPA priorities and initiatives.

To ensure that the Agency would receive significant input from affected stakeholders, the **NEJAC** was established as a Federal Advisory Committee and chartered for two years effective 9/3/93, re-chartered 9/3/95, and rechartered for the second time effective 9/29/97. During its first two years, the NEJAC Council consisted of 23 members appointed from key environmental justice constituencies, which include community-based groups; business and industry; academic and educational institutions; state and local governments; tribal governments; non-governmental organizations; and environmental groups. The NEJAC Council also had four subcommittees to help develop strategic options for EPA. Each subcommittee was comprised of approximately 12 individuals knowledgeable in the subject area, from the NEJAC Council as well as from other stakeholder organizations. These were: **Waste and Facility Siting; Enforcement; Health and Research; and Public Participation and Accountability**. In 1995 two new subcommittees were established: **Indigenous Peoples Subcommittee** and **International Subcommittee**. Contact the federal employee responsible for overseeing each one named below.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the 1993-96 period, the NEJAC produced a number of products and provided consensus advice to help the Agency focus its environmental justice agenda. For example, the initial draft of EPA's Environmental Justice Strategy required by Executive Order 12898 was reviewed and substantive recommendations made; the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response's Facility Siting Criteria document was reviewed; a public forum protocol was developed and subsequently used as the model for the first Interagency Public Meeting on Environmental Justice (Atlanta, 1/19/95); in October 1997 the Model was used for the first NEJAC/EPA Enforcement Roundtable in San Antonio; the US-Mexico Border XXI program proposal was reviewed; health and research projects to identify high risk communities were developed; reviewed and commented on the Agency's enforcement and compliance work plan; and public

dialogues were conducted in five major cities concerning possible solutions to urban crises resulting from loss of economic opportunities caused by pollution and relocation of businesses.

MEETING DATES AND LOCATION

When funds permit, meetings are held at different locations to ensure that local concerns can be expressed in the open forum provided by the NEJAC. The first meeting was held May 20, 1994 in Washington, D.C., followed by meetings in Albuquerque, NM, August 3-5, 1994; Herndon, VA, October 25-27, 1994; Atlanta, GA, January 17-19, 1995; Washington, DC, July 25-27, 1995; Washington, DC, December 12-14, 1995; Detroit, MI, May 29-31, 1996; Baltimore, MD, December 10-12, 1996; Wabeno, Wisconsin, May 13-15, 1997; Durham, NC, December 8-10, 1997 which was followed by the Enforcement Round December 11-13, 1997; and a special business meeting of the Executive Council of NEJAC, Arlington, VA, February 23-24, 1998. The next meeting will be held in Oakland, CA as indicated below:

NEJAC MEETING MAY 31 - JUNE 3, 1998

Oakland Marriott City Center
1001 Broadway
Oakland, CA 94607
(510) 451-4000

PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Executive Order provided for agencies to hold public meetings to receive comments, questions, and recommendations regarding environmental justice issues.

On January 20, 1995, an Interagency Public Meeting on Environmental Justice was conducted at Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia, in conjunction with the NEJAC meeting. Ten agencies and over 350 people attended the day-long event. In addition, an estimated 1,000 people watched the evening session, which was televised via satellite to approximately 40 locations across the nation including Puerto Rico. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for the public to share concerns and recommend changes in the federal agencies' environmental justice strategies. Extensive comments were provided by stakeholders throughout the day. All comments and responses were recorded in a transcript that is available to the public.

On December 12, 1995, the first satellite downlink during the Public Comment Period was performed during the NEJAC meeting held in Washington, DC. Two sites in Puerto Rico were able to verbally provide public comments from community groups and citizens otherwise unable to address the NEJAC. This type of communication vehicle will be explored for future public comment sessions with remote communities.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Each NEJAC meeting has at least 2 hours for members of the public to register and make statements before the full NEJAC. The comments are recorded and maintained as a part of the public record of each meeting. Each meeting record is available to the public in Room 2224 South Oval, Ariel Rios Building, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20004. In some cases hard copies are available. Call the OEJ Information Line on 1-800-962-6215.

RENEWING MEMBERSHIP

The Federal Advisory Committee Act requires that a committee be rechartered every two years and that membership be rotated to provide the widest participation possible by the greatest number of stakeholders. The NEJAC Charter has been rechartered for two more years effective 9/29/97. This year there was significant turnover of membership. To receive the most up-to-date information about the NEJAC, contact our web site at: <http://www.ttemi.com/nejac>.

MEMBERSHIP OF NEJAC

The membership is rotated to provide the greatest possible opportunity for a variety of individuals to serve on NEJAC. To ensure that all views are represented, membership is comprised of a balanced representation of the following groups: **Academia, Community Groups, Environmental Organizations, State or Local Governments, Tribal Governments, Non-Government Organizations, and Industry.**

NEJAC KEY CONTACTS

Mr. Haywood Turrentine, Chair	NEJAC
Mr. Arthur Ray, Chair	Enforcement Subcommittee
Dr. Mary English, Chair	Health and Research Subcommittee
Dr. Christine Benally, Acting	Indigenous Peoples Subcommittee
Mr. Baldemar Velasquez, Chair	International Subcommittee
Ms. Rosa Hilda Ramos, Chair	Public Participation & Accountability Subcommittee
Mr. Charles Lee, Chair	Waste and Facility Siting Subcommittee

For Specific Information, Call The Designated Federal Official (DFO) Named Below

SUBCOMMITTEE	DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICIAL
NEJAC	Mr. Robert Knox - 202-564-2515
Enforcement	Ms. Sherry Milan - 202-564-2619
Health & Research	Mr. Lawrence Martin - 202-564-6497
Indigenous People	Mr. Danny Gogal - 202-564-2576
International	Ms. Wendy Graham - 202-564-4602
Public Participation	Ms. Renee Goins - 202-564-2515
Waste & Facility Siting	Mr. Kent Benjamin - 202-564-2599

INTERNET ACCESS

Information about the NEJAC is available on the Internet. To access the site, enter: <http://www.ttemi.com/nejac>. You will be prompted to select a variety of options for information about NEJAC.

There is also an events calendar where you may add the dates and locations of upcoming meetings related to environmental justice. You will be given an opportunity to add your name to the Office of Environmental Justice's mailing list and be able to "link" to other sites of interest.

MEETING SUMMARIES

A special business meeting monitor of the February 1998 meeting held in Arlington, VA is attached. Other meeting summaries are available off the Internet or call 1-800-962-6215 to request copies. You can also visit the NEJAC web site to stay up-to-date on all activities.

CALL 1-800-962-6215

Ask for Marva King or Linda Smith

Attachment:

- Special Business Executive Council Meeting Monitor of the February 23-24, 1998.